Published and Copyright (c) 1999
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- CC: Classic Chips

With Contributions by:

Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
Olivier Booklage
Chris Cavanaugh
Rob Mahlert
Lee Krueger
Greg Goodwin

To subscribe to A-ONE, send a message to: dpj@delphi.com
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to subscribed from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the following sites:

http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm
http://www.icwhen.com
http://a1mag.atari.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #0126 08/27/99

~ Stan Lee Goes Online! ~ People Are Talking! ~ New CAB.OVL!
~ Preview of Y2K: 9/9/99 ~ MSN Messenger Glitch! ~ Classics Museum!
~ MS and Sun Flip-Flop! ~ More CG Expo Reports! ~ CGExpo "Heroes"!
~ AOL Improves Messenger ~ 'Classic Gamer' Debuts ~ NFL Blitz 2000!

-* Don Thomas' Site Wins Award! *-
-* Whatever Happened To Screensavers?? *-

-* Free Web-based E-Mail At Atari-Users.Net!! *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"

Last week I missed mentioning that we at A-ONE were celebrating a milestone of sorts: our 25th issue. A minor event, but one that seemed worthy of recognition. I remember a phone conversation I had a few days after our third issue came out, with Don Thomas. During that conversation, Don wished me congratulations on our third issue. I didn’t understand the significance of that particular feat, so I asked him. He told me that one issue was an accomplishment in and of itself - that we set out to start something and did so. The second issue is sort of obligatory - we did one, we had to do another or the significance of the first would be lost. After our third issue came out, three weeks in a row, we were committed and proved it.

So here we are, with our 26th issue in a row. It’s satisfying that both Joe Mirando and I set out to get out from under the safety net of writing for someone else, with few concerns other than getting our columns done and in on time. Now, not only do we get in our columns in on time, but put everything else together also. And, we have help and support!

But, it doesn’t end there. Once the text version of the issue is done, uploaded to Delphi and CompuServe, or mailed out to our online subscription list; both Joe and I put together a version for the Internet sites - an HTML version. Let me tell you - Thursday and Friday nights are crunch time! It’s all a blur trying to get both "editions" done and available by 8:00 p.m. Friday evening!

So yes, Don, as I mentioned to you 23 issues ago, we’re here to stay (or as long as people are willing to read A-ONE!). It’s been fun so far. No problems (major ones, anyway), no stress, no nonsense. We’re enjoying doing A-ONE and seeing people enjoy reading it.

Have we accomplished many of the goals that we set out to do? I’d say we’ve accomplished some. We’re still striving to improve. We’re still trying to do some more exclusive stuff. We’re looking for more feature columns and articles. It takes time, especially when we’re doing the collecting of news, writing of articles/columns, and publishing it by ourselves! Those things alone take up a lot of time; it doesn’t leave much for the other things we want to accomplish. But, we’re still aiming for those goals. With your support, we’ll get there.

Meanwhile, I’ll finish up the clean-up of this week’s issue and then start to enjoy the final week of my summer vacations.

Until next time...

New CAB.OVL for CAB/Stik/STinG

From: Olivier Booklage (res1@vcf-com.fr)

A new version of CAB.OVL for CAB/StiK/STinG is available on my Homepage.
CAB.OVL V5.54 beta

Near Fixed: No more 0 bytes/second during download.

New : The module check hotlist can be used for scanning changed documents.

New : In configuration SETUP a turbo mode is added. Increase data flow for medium documents.

Cheers,
Olivier.

Atari-Users.Net

From: Rob Mahlert

August 22, 1999

Atari-Users Network's New File Download Area is open.

The new area allows users to:

Upload Files, Search File Area by Name, type or platform.

*Netscape or MSIE 2.0+ required for uploading of files

Atari-Users Network is also offering FREE web based e-mail.

mail to: Webmaster@atari-Users.net

Are you in Atari-Users.Net's Links Engine?

Add Your Site Today!
WWW.Atari-Users.Net
Atari Chat, Forums, Links, Files and Banner Exchange.

mail to: Rob@Atari-Users.Net
http://www.Atari-Users.Net

ATARI COMPUTING REFLECTIONS

From: Greg Goodwin (clu-da-bard@geocities.com)

Well, to share for all, and if you would like to add in your magazine (grin) feel free to do so.

MULTIVERSES

by Greg Goodwin

Atari was always a fun name to me. As a elementary student, I played the Atari 2600. As a junior high and high school student I fought along side other Atarians with my modified Atari 400 in the great Atari/Commodore War on the BBS's.

Entering college, the 8-bit scene died away, and in America the ST didn't appear to go anywhere, so I bought a Macintosh, and later a Newton. Through the years the Mac proved to be a fine machine, but it never had the games and the fun feel of my Atari days.

Nine years passed.

Through time I found myself returning to my old stomping grounds of computer geekdom at the Dallas Infomart. The faces were all different, and the computers where the standard PC and Mac, but it was good to be back. The exchange of computer equipment, and charisma challenged people made me feel at home. Then I looked at the schedule of user meetings projected on a wall in the DFW/Exchange vendor room.

"Atari Users of North Texas... what!?!" On the seventh floor, just like it had been a decade before. "Incredible!" With my wife to be accompanying we entered the swift moving glass elevator. The beautiful scenery of the "Crystal Palace" environment of wood paneling, glass, and neon green lights rushed by us, and soon we were there, the seventh level.

We walked to the place where DAL-ACE had been, but the large meeting room capable of seating three hundred only met me with a rush of air conditioned sterile air.

"Over here love!" I heard my lady call. I walked to where she was, and found a heart warming scene compared to the hassle and bustle of the business oriented user group I had left thirteen years before.

Stepping into the room, we found an old man with a beard leaning against a folding table in front of an assortment of about nine other people sitting in chairs listening. Little did I realize it, I had entered a years long AUNT tradition of the grand sermon of Dave Acklam!

"Aha! Welcome... a new member!"

"A new / old member actually. I'm from the days of DAL-ACE!"

"Oh my gosh! You are old. Have a seat, welcome back!"

I introduced myself as an Atari 8-bit User. The group was astonished, and many had been 8-bit users turned ST users through time. It became quickly apparent that these people, while good natured, actually seemed to see their computer as little more than just fun hobby machines, though that could also be said.

As Dave preached on, my lady and I sat back in sheer bliss to see such a charming group of people ranging from their late twenties to their sixties. The later was more the case.

"Here we have the newest edition of the Pacesetter from our die hard 8-bit user friends in Florida. Amazing how those guys keep plugging away on their 8-bit Ataris and meet and have fun in their retirement community they seem to have there. But isn't that what the Atari stuff is all about? Just having fun seeing what these old computers are still

capable of doing.

And speaking of which, I recently got the newest issue of ATARI COMPUTING number ten, which is to the best of my knowledge, the only professionally produced magazine in the world."

What was this? Had I fallen asleep? A computer platform with a magazine? I had heard that Amiga had a fanatical following, but Atari?

The next meeting, Kent Kordes from SYSTEMS FOR TOMORROW came to our meeting to sell his Atari merchandise while Dave Acklam displayed importing files from digital cameras on a Falcon, and Michael White displayed internet browsing with STIK. It was then I shelled out the money and bought that magazine for my lady since it had a X-Files theme to the cover.

Later I would thumb through the pages of the magazine. I was amazed to see a magazine that had produced such a startling magazine with current fandom material like X-Files to have been produced by an Atari Computer.

The magazine had a new book smell. It advertised the new Milan computer, talked about shows in Europe, and possibilities of continuing the Atari era through other platforms like a Macintosh. Then there was talk about hardware hacks for existing Atari computers, pictures, adds, and articles. An initial impression was that Atari had a very fun and creative community eager to show what the world what their machines could still do, in sometimes a different way, and sometimes better a way.

Years ago there was a comic book released with Atari games called "Atari Force" and in that series, the crew of a starship, complete with "ATR 8000" onboard computer by the way, travelled through "Multiverses" or realms of other possibilities of what could have been.

As I flipped through the pages of that magazine with the X-Files cover, I stepped out of a world with a dominate PC computer with an lesser Macintosh tag along to a multiverse where Atari computers were kept alive and well by it’s users and vendors. I had returned to the world of computing that I knew, and I intend to stay.

Many thanks to the staff of ATARI COMPUTING for being that portal to a multiverse that I may not have found otherwise.

Greg Goodwin (aka "Doctor Clu")
greg@atariusers.com
New ST User and editor of AUNT BYTES
http://www.atariusers.com/AUNT

=~=~=~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, things are leveling out a bit at my ’day job’ and I’m now able to ponder the deeper questions in the Universe.

Questions like "Should I dump Win98 in favor of Linux on my shiny new laptop?", "Should I add more memory to it now, or wait until prices drop yet again?", or "Should I just cut my losses now and go back to using the TT and the Stacy full time?".

Yes folks, this wiz-bang laptop is faster than can be believed and almost all of the new, awe-inspiring software and hardware that comes out will be available for it, but it’s still saddled with Microsoft and Intel. Now, I know what you’re going to say (or at least what some of you are going to say)... "But Intel leads the world in microprocessors and Microsoft is THE standard in operating systems."

And you’d be right. Both observations are correct... for the most part. The fact is, Intel CPUs are still somewhat inelegant and "cludgy", and Microsoft’s offerings are the de facto standard because they got lucky several times and in several important areas.

Both companies succeeded mainly because they tied their wagons to IBM’s star. Had any other company decided to rely on the offerings of Microsoft and Intel, what became known as the "PC" would have quickly died away in favor of other, more elegant and user-friendly solutions.

In a perfect world this would never have happened. But we don’t live in a perfect world, do we? We live in a world where might makes right, and you can often make yourself ’right’ by shouting louder than the other guy.

Although I can, I seldom shout anymore. I prefer to go my own way and offer my opinions only when I actually have opinions.

Now, where did I put that Linux installation disk? <g>

Well, let’s get on with the reason for this column... the news, hints, tips, and info about our favorite machine.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Laurent Charrioe asks about Linux (of all things) and using it on an Atari hard drive:

"I have an SCSI hard disk that was the main disk of an Atari Falcon (under standard TOS). Now I have a PC (shame) under Linux with an SCSI controller. Is there a way to read the files on the Atari HD under Linux/x86?

More specifically, will the kernel (what version?) read the partition table? (I think I had both GEM and BGM partitions) Will it recognize TOS file systems?"

Michael Schmitz tells Laurent:

"Compile a kernel that includes Atari partition table format (CONFIG_ATARI_PARTITION). Should be in 2.2 ..."

Those of you who are at least a little familiar with Linux will understand. The rest of us will have to guess at the exact meaning.

Jes Sorensen adds:

"Only the m68k kernels, however it is in (distribution number) 2.3.14."

Paul Mac asks about installing STinG on his Falcon:

"I'm trying to setup STing on my Falcon but am encountering difficulties. (audible moans :))

When I dial up my ISP the dial script works fine until where on my STe it would 'resolve the host' on my Falcon it says that it has 'failed to pass the connection on to STING'. And hangs up.

However STing is installed and activated from the CPX. The setup is copied from my STe , is there something I've missed?"

Steve Stupple asks Paul:

"Have you checked that STinG is using the correct port on the Falcon?"

Paul tells Steve:

"Yes. I think it must be,

I've read the hyp file, and the port problem with the Falcon is mentioned.

I downloaded the latest STing, and set it up again, and this time it hangs on 'Connected...'

I've set the dial.scr to modem 2, but can't find anything to change in the STing setup, is there an option I've missed?

Do I need to activate a port in the sting port cpx? When I try and activate Modem 2 I get a 'Activation of port 'modem2' failed! '

Are there any Falcon owners out there who have had a similar problem?"

Ben Hills tells Paul:

"I have had this error before and if I remember correctly it was caused by an incorrect installation of HS Modem. Check that HS Modem is installed correctly."

Tony Cianfaglione tells Paul:

"If it hangs on 'connected', check your password. It cannot be longer than 8 characters as the SERIAL.CPX has a hard-coded 8 character limit by mistake. That's what caught me. Once I changed the password to 8 characters from my earlier 10 characters, STinG connected fine."

Derryck Croker adds:

"Make sure that you have the correct drivers from HSModem installed for the Falcon, and ensure that you put sting.prg AFTER HSmodem in the Auto folder. You should be using modem2 in your script."

Paul tells everyone who helped out:

"Thanks for all your help , STing is certainly an education!!

mmm... the problem seemed to be that I didn't have HSModem installed.

However I didn't realise that HSModem HAD to be installed in order for STing to connect? Because that is the case on my system. (Falcon)

Anyone setting up STing should therefore should not underestimate the importance of HSModem. Anyway thanks again for everyones help. I think I have about 10 peoples scripts and config files on my HD. "

Alyre Chiasson asks for options for just about the only Y2K issue I've heard about for ST computers:

"Having scanned the web for info on Atari computers and Y2K I came across the statement that Superboot was not Y2K. This program has served me well on my MEGA STE for years. However, I am now wondering with what program I can replace it? Any suggestions? Rolling back the clock is not an option as I want my files properly dated. Must work on a MegaSTe."

Steve Stupple tells Alyre:

"I gave up Superboot a while ago, I now use Xboot. It doesn't have all the ribbons and bells Superboot has, but is dead easy to use and you can have lots of boot up defaults.

You can also have 3 files that can be moved to the root of your boot drive and can be different source in every config. The files I use them for are: desktop.inf, newdesk.inf and assign.sys."

While on the subject, Gordy Tesla asks:

"I was wondering....can Superboot be used past the year 2000 as long as you don't set the date and time with it or will I have to change completely?"

David Bolt tells Gordy:

"It seems to work fine past 2000 as long as you don't have it setting the date

Jochen Fietz tells David and Gordy:

"Bad news for you: I've checked XBoot and noticed, that it is NOT Y2k compliant: set the clock to 1.1.2000 or later and then try to create a new set - Xboot will crash. It's a pity cause I like Xboot too. Have a look at TUBS, it will also do good work."

Chris Swinson asks:

"I was wondering if there was ever any kits or anything about converting a STFM to 16 meg ? I know the MMU only takes up to 4 meg, but was there ever anything to get around this ?"

NIcholas Bales tells Chris:

"There is the german Magnum board which allows this. It is pretty expensive and requires TOS 2.06 too. I think it's from woller or aixit. There aren't that many apps that would take advantage of this, so unless you are multitasking like hell, there's probably not much benefit considering the price."

Derryck Croker tells Chris:

"Yes, www.aixit.com, and there's a review in a back issue of Atari Computing."

Well folks, that's it for this week. I've taken another whack at using that PC laptop for gathering the posts for this column, and it just ain't as easy as with NEWSie on a good ol' ST.

Do you think I'm kidding? I'll include one more post to prove my point. In his own words, Louis Holleman tells us:

"Well, I've got this fast Winbox now, and it's fast indeed. Compared to my 10-year old TT, pics load/display much faster, html-sites get in a lot faster and also mail and news is fetched a lot faster.

Now before you think: another Windoze sucker, nope, I'm still glad I've got this old TT. I used to run fidostuff with a BBS: mailer/reader/maintainer. Especially the reader was pretty easy on the configs. Never had a problem to select the msgs I wanted to keep and others I wanted to discard. Next came the Internet stuff, same thing. I've been working with Newsie, FireNews, and Okami/Newswatch and for this stuff I only needed 15 minutes to figure out how it worked.

Not so on the Win platform: I've been trying NS Communicator, well, sorry, after more than 1 day still haven't found out how to get stuff for offline reading.

Since I couldn't find (so far) anything better, I reluctantly installed Outlook Express 5, at least I know it does handle offline reading. Don't ask me details, I can barely manage to get it done.

Next problem is the maintenance of the only group I hooked up thus far, comp.sys.atari.st, I haven't figured out how to keep the interesting ones and discard the rest in the last 24 hrs....

I know we've been discussing Atari browsers a lot lately, and for sure the Win browsers are fast (I really love Opera; just too bad it won't handle offline newsreading), I'm not complaining about Pegasus for e-mail, but the bloody news stuff is giving me a headache here. User-friendly? Stick with Atari please, it might be old but even a sucker figures out the s/w within 15 minutes."

I'll leave you with that and remind you to keep your nose to the grindstone and your ear to the wind so that you'll be able to hear what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - More CGE '99 Reports & Comments!!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Legacy of Kain'! Award to ICWHEN!
"Classic Gamer" Debuts! 'WCW Mayhem'!
'NFL Blitz 2000'! And much more!

->From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

The buzz from the recent Classic Gaming Expo '99 show is still alive. All but one of the show reports I've seen so far have been extremely positive. And yes, we have more reports for you this week! In fact, the one negative report was from a gaming magazine reporter who seemed to want to spend more time in the casino losing his money than doing his job and reporting on the show. I'd be amazed if he spent more than an hour or two actually at the weekend show.

So, while I continue to pore over the "goodies" that were sent to me from the show, I'll let you read more about it, and the rest of the gaming news we have in store this week.

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

NFL Blitz 2000 Kicks Off Ahead of Schedule

NFL Blitz 2000, the sequel to last season's highly successful NFL Blitz, has hurdled out of training camp early. Midway Home Entertainment Inc., one of the industry's leading video game publishers and developers, today announced that NFL Blitz 2000 has shipped to retail for the Nintendo 64 and PlayStation game console. NFL Blitz 2000 will be available as a launch title for Sega Dreamcast on September 9 and for the Game Boy Color and PC in the fall.

''Our award-winning development team has added a host of new features to the over-the-top, arcade-style game play that made NFL Blitz such a tremendous success and the top-selling football game on the N64," said Paula Cook, director of marketing at Midway Home Entertainment. ''Last season NFL Blitz won several game of the year awards and to ensure that NFL

Blitz 2000 successfully defends that title, we are backing it with a multi-million dollar marketing campaign with extensive network and cable television advertising."

With no refs, no rules, and no mercy, NFL Blitz 2000 has emerged from the development tunnel padded with a host of new features. A play editor allows digital offensive and defensive coordinators to create their own plays. After drawing up new plays, gamers can instantly check out their X's and O's in action by utilizing the game's instant preview feature. NFL Blitz 2000 also includes team playbooks, four-player action, ''on-fire" mode, updated 1999 rosters, fantasy stadiums, heightened play-select artificial intelligence, improved weather effects, as well as new codes, field conditions, camera angles, animations and secret players.

Based on the arcade hit, the highly successful NFL Blitz was released last year for the PlayStation game console, Nintendo 64, Game Boy Color and PC. The rave reviews were widespread with Sports Illustrated stating that ''NFL Blitz is simply the most fun game on the market." Electric Playground added that ''Midway's astonishingly addictive NFL Blitz is possibly the most fun and addictive game ever developed," while the Miami Herald exclaimed, ''NFL Blitz sets the standard for football video games!" NFL Blitz was also the recipient of several awards including Nintendo Power's, ''Best Sports Game of 1998," Videogames.com's, ''Game of the Year," IGN64.com's ''Best Sports Game of 1998," and was selected as one of the ''best games of 1998" in GQ.

An officially licensed product of the NFL and PLAYERS INC, NFL Blitz 2000 features all 31 teams, each comprised of seven of the best offensive and defensive players from each team. With graphically detailed tackle animations and killer artificial intelligence, NFL Blitz 2000 sets the standard for arcade-style football video games.

Eidos Interactive Announces the Release of the Highly Anticipated Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver for PlayStation

Raziel rises to battle the vampire hordes of Lord Kain, in this revolutionary 3D action-adventure game from Eidos Interactive and developer Crystal Dynamics.

Set amidst eerie, real-time environments with a dark storyline, vengeful vampire Raziel journeys the underworld to Nosgoth where he must become a reaver of souls, as he sets off to destroy his former master.

In Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, players guide Raziel as he battles his former brethren on the path to his ultimate confrontation with Kain. As Raziel absorbs the clan leader's souls, he gains their powers, which allows him to explore new areas of the world. Featuring dynamic gameplay mechanics such as gliding and soul-devouring to maintain life, plane-shifting, and an innovative hand-to-hand combat system, Soul Reaver revolutionizes the action adventure genre.

Initial reviews on Soul Reaver from the industry publications and online gaming magazines have been exceptional. VideoGames.com recently posted a 9.0 out of 10 score and PS Extreme magazine reported a 98% review score. The PC version will be available in early September.

Electronic Arts Ships Madden NFL 2000 for the PlayStation

Electronic Arts last week announced that it has shipped Madden NFL 2000 for the PlayStation.

An increased framerate, improved running game and multitude of revolutionary new features makes Madden NFL 2000 the deepest football simulation available on the market. Madden NFL 2000 will be available on the Nintendo 64, Game Boy Color and PC later this fall.

According to the TRSTS Video Game Report published by the NPD group, Madden NFL 99 was the top selling PlayStation sports video game in 1998 in North America. The NPD group reports that Madden NFL 99 on the PlayStation sold 1,128,366 units in 1998. That number is over 164,000 more than its closest competitor in the sports category.

Madden NFL 2000 marks the ten-year anniversary for the John Madden Football franchise. The first Madden football game from Electronic Arts shipped in 1989. Ten years of experience has helped Madden and the team at Electronic Arts create the best playing and best looking game in the history of the franchise.

‘‘The most important thing to me is that we keep pushing the limits of what is possible in a video game," said John Madden, Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and former Super Bowl-winning coach. ‘‘The more we innovate and work hard the longer we’ll continue to be the leader. That’s the way it is in the NFL and that’s the way it is in video games. We are passionate about this game, and it shows. That’s why everybody else is always playing catch-up. We’ll continue to lead the pack because we work the hardest for the fans. After ten years of loyalty we owe it to them."

For the legions of die-hard Madden fans that demand deeper features and control with each new version, Madden NFL 2000 really shines. All 31 current NFL teams, including the new Cleveland Browns, are represented in the game. Numerous All-Time and Super Bowl teams provide a multitude of match-ups for historical football fans.

A new Madden situation creator makes it possible to create any game situation, such as having to drive 99 yards in the last two minutes of a game. New dynamically enhanced audio and play-by-play help bring the game to life. New on-field graphics include more detailed playing fields, nets behind goalposts for kicks, TV-style first down markers, and players, coaches and other personnel on the sideline.

New player taunts to get under your opponent’s skin and rattle his nerves bring the ‘‘in-your-face" aspect of the game to new heights. New player models feature high-resolution graphics so that hefty lineman, sleek wide receivers and stocky linebackers now have body types proportionate to their real life counterparts.

The weight and height of each player is now factored into collisions to help determine how much ground a ball carrier gains as the tackle is made, so that a small defensive back will have a tough time knocking a big bruising fullback down. New Player Hot and Cold streaks enables a player to get ‘‘in the zone" and stay hot to make great plays, or get cold to keep dropping passes, fumbling and hurting his team.

New route-based passing helps a quarterback lead a receiver and throw the ball to the spot a receiver will be in, before the receiver makes his cut on the covering defensive back. The new ‘‘Madden Challenge" enables the user to gain access to secret teams, stadiums and other treats if statistical goals are met. An enhanced play editor lets the user design custom plays with new receiver routes, and more control over motion and play-action passes.

An expanded franchise mode allows multiple users to trade players and juggle the salary cap over multiple seasons. A new player editor provides the ability to change individual player ratings during the season.

‘‘The team that creates John Madden Football is as talented and dedicated as any in the business," said John Schappert, executive in charge of production, Electronic Arts. ‘‘It starts at the top with John himself, and carries through to every member of the team. The results are plain to see. Madden NFL 2000 is an incredible achievement."

For those new to video games that want a quick, easy, fun game with a short learning curve, Madden delivers. Madden’s revolutionary One-Button Mode enables a user to hike the ball, hand off to a running back, throw the ball to the open receiver, make a big tackle, spin the ball carrier, throw a stiff-arm or hurdle to avoid a tackle by simply hitting the ‘‘X" or ‘‘action" button.

Madden NFL 2000 for the PlayStation supports Analog Control delivering force feedback. The suggested retail price is (U.S.) $39.95. Consumers may purchase the game directly at the EA Store (www.ea.com/store) or by calling EA Direct Sales at 800/245-4525. The game carries an ESRB rating of ‘‘E" (Everyone).

Electronic Arts Reveals Details On WCW Mayhem Video Game and Announces Development of a Game Boy Color Version

Electronic Arts reveals more details on the highly-anticipated WCW Mayhem for both the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 systems.

In addition, the industry leader announces the development of a Game Boy Color system version, which marks one of the first ventures in which Electronic Arts (EA) will directly publish and distribute a game for this platform. The upcoming fall release of WCW Mayhem on all three platforms stems from the exclusive long term partnership for interactive entertainment game titles between EA and the World Championship Wrestling Inc. (WCW), providers of power-packed family sports entertainment.

‘‘It’s been such an amazing and exciting experience to see how we have been able to advance what has been done to date within the wrestling game category," says Chuck Osieja, producer at Electronic Arts. ‘‘WCW Mayhem delivers the most innovative technology advancements and unique gameplay features ever attempted within the genre, so we are more than confident that this title will provide gamers and wrestling fans the ultimate interactive wrestling experience."

Based on the world of WCW and its line up of high-profile wrestlers, WCW Mayhem recreates an authentic professional wrestling environment by utilizing realistic, cutting edge graphics, fluid audio presentation and special effects. WCW Mayhem will allow gamers to wrestle in 15 different

WCW ring sets including Monday Nitro, Thursday Thunder, Saturday Night, as well as all 12 WCW Pay Per View (PPV) settings.

The PPV mode lets players experience a four match PPV event simply by entering a valid passcode that can be obtained via the official EA product web site (www.wcwmayhem.com). Prior to each real-life WCW PPV event, gamers will enter the code that will allow them to wrestle in matches that mirror the actual PPV event for that month.

WCW Mayhem also extends beyond the boundaries of the traditional wrestling game with its unique ‘‘out of hand and out of the ring" gameplay aspect. This feature, not found in other current wrestling titles, will allow players to take the action 15 different backstage areas such as garages, locker rooms and bathrooms -- all of which are located away from the main event arenas. Adding to the overall experience, each of the backstage arena action will been seen through a black and white security camera that will randomly switch back to an actual in-game camera view.

Additionally, there will be items (i.e. chairs, traffic sign, steel gate, trash can, baseball bat and even a kitchen sink) in the main event sets and backstage areas that wrestlers will be able to pick up and use against one another.

More than 50 top WCW wrestlers will be available in WCW Mayhem, in addition to a ‘‘create a custom wrestler" feature from a series of unique physical characteristics, outfits and names. Celebrity WCW wrestlers and commentators featured in the game will include:

Alex Wright
Arn Anderson
Bam Bam Bigelow
Barry Windham
Bobby Blaze
Bobby Duncum Jr.
"Beautiful" Bobby Eaton
Booker T
Bret "Hitman" Hart
Buff Bagwell
Chavo Guerrero Jr.
Chris "The Crippler" Benoit
Chris Jericho
Curt Hennig
Diamond Dallas Page
Dean Malenko
Disco Inferno
Doug Dellinger
Eddy Guerrero
Eric Bischoff
Ernest "The Cat" Miller
Goldberg
Hollywood Hogan
Horace Hogan
Jimmy "The Mouth of the South" Hart
Juventud Guerrera
Kanyon
Kaz Hayashi
Kenny Kaos
Kevin "Big Sexy" Nash
Billy Kidman
Konnan
La Parka
Lash LeRoux
Lex Luger
Lizmark Jr.
"Macho Man" Randy Savage
Mean Gene Okerlund
Norman Smiley
Prince Iaukea
Psychosis
Raven
Rey Mysterio Jr.
Ric Flair
Rick Steiner
Sgt. Buddy Lee Parker
Perry Saturn
Scott Hall
Scott Norton
Scott "Big Poppa Pump" Steiner
Sonny Onoo
Steve "Mongo" McMichael
Stevie Ray
Sting (standard)
Sting (Wolfpac)
Wrath

WCW Mayhem will feature more than 600 motion captured animations that provide every WCW wrestler character with a unique set of moves, including

signature taunts and finishing moves. The game will also feature more than 8,000 lines of stitched voice over dialogue to help provide seamless, life-like play-by-play and color commentary from the actual WCW broadcasters including Tony Schiavone, Bobby ‘‘The Brain" Heenan and Mean Gene Okerlund.

Helping to deliver a realistic experience, reactions from the Artificial Intelligence (AI) crowd will vary with an array of chants, cheers or boos according to how the match is going.

Both the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 version will support up to four players (PlayStation via the multi-tap peripheral).

The Game Boy Color version of WCW Mayhem builds upon the ‘‘out of hand, out of the ring" experience ‘‘out of the home" with its convenient portability. The game will deliver a colorful, exciting arcade-oriented WCW wrestling experience. Similar to its console system counterparts, the game will offer an array of backstage areas including a back alley and locker room, in addition to the main event arena.

Players will be able to choose from 12 WCW wrestlers such as Goldberg, Hollywood Hogan, Sting, Kevin ‘‘Big Sexy" Nash, ‘‘Macho Man" Randy Savage, Ric Flair, Diamond Dallas Page, Booker T, Bret ‘‘Hitman" Hart, Bam Bam Bigelow, Buff Bagwell and Lex Luger.

WCW Mayhem for the Game Boy Color will be the only wrestling title that offers multi-player link support. Players will be able to connect two machines via the link cable to engage in head-to-head wrestling matches.

Midway Unveils Multi-Million Dollar Domestic Marketing Campaign for Ready 2 Rumble Boxing

TV Spot Features Special Appearance by World-Renowned Boxing Announcer Michael "Let’s Get Ready to Rumble" Buffer

In support of its highly-anticipated Ready 2 Rumble Boxing video game, Midway Home Entertainment Inc. is launching a multi-million dollar marketing campaign for the company’s Ready 2 Rumble Boxing game for the Sega Dreamcast. This campaign is scheduled to begin with the launch of the highly anticipated Dreamcast system on September 9 and will continue to support the release of the PlayStation game console, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color.

‘‘Ready 2 Rumble Boxing has the potential to emerge as the flagship installment in a new Midway franchise which expands the niche Midway has created in arcade-style over-the-top sports titles," said Paula Cook, director of Marketing for Midway Home Entertainment. ‘‘With the backing of this comprehensive advertising and marketing campaign, Midway will blitz the media and consumers and ensure maximum exposure throughout TV, print, internet and in-store promotional support for Ready 2 Rumble Boxing’s launch with the Sega Dreamcast on September 9 and continuing through the holiday season."

Ready 2 Rumble Boxing gives players the opportunity to compete as one of 16 boxers, each with his own fighting style. Each boxer is hyper realistic with an unlimited number of punch combinations for both realistic and

over-the-top boxing styles. Players can compete in arcade-style mode, contend for a championship belt or play head-to-head on the system. Sega Dreamcast, PlayStation game console and Nintendo 64 will all have special characters exclusive to their systems while Game Boy Color will have a built-in Rumble Pak feature.

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!

CGE ’99 A Classic Games Enthusiasts View

From: Lee Krueger (resqsoft@earthlink.net)

CGE ’99 A Classic Games Enthusiasts View

By Lee Krueger

I attended the Classic Gaming Expo in Las Vegas over the last weekend. I went as an enthusiasts with no agenda other than hoping to have an enjoyable time. I arrived Thursday night, arriving from Seattle on a internet airfare special that I booked in advance. I think it cost me $52 each way (excluding airport taxes and such). I stayed, like most at the Plaza Hotel, sharing a room with a classic gaming friend (Rob Brown), and my costs was $89 for the room from Thursday night thru Sunday night. When you add the $27 I spent for the admission ticket to the show, I think I invested a total of $220 (excluding food and entertainment) to attend the CGE show. Below is summary of what I got for my money.

On friday I woke up late (well late for me as I usually get up at 5:00 a.m. every morning to go to work). I did notice the Plaza hotel seemed a little dated and was obviously an older establishment in Vegas. However, the accommodations were much better than I had just experienced a couple of days before. I had just arrived back from an expedition in Northern British Columbia where I spent every night in a tent swapping away mosquitoes and horse flies for more than a week. On our way out to breakfast Rob and I met up with the organizers (Sean, John, et. al.) in the elevator. We followed them to the exhibit hall where we were immediately recruited by Keita as volunteers to help unload the trucks and setup. We gladly accepted the task as we were not planing on doing much else that day except maybe sight see. As both, Rob and myself, are from a much cooler and wetter climate in Seattle we didn’t care to see the smoke infested casinos and shows in 90+ degree heat. In any event, we got to see the displays and meet many folks who would be rather busy over the weekend during the show. Additionally, I was able to meet Ken (his last name eludes me) who was with B&C Computers. Like me, Ken is an Aerospace engineer from the McDonnell Douglas division in Long Beach. He had worked on many airplanes throughout his career before retiring a few years ago. As I work for Boeing (which recently bought out McD), it was

fascinating to hear and swap some of our stories and experiences at a professional level. Something I rarely get to do outside of my work environment. In any event, after everything was basically set up, we were able look over the place, play a few video arcade games and chat with more enthusiasts, including a one-on-one chat with Don Thomas in regards to the last days of Atari and the Jaguar. It was NEAT.

On saturday, Rob and I arrived early to register and get in line for the show. The nice part about this was the fact that since this was idle time, I was able to meet and chat with many folks that I have emailed, traded with and seen around on the newsgroups. It was very nice to put faces to the names of the folks whom I have come to know as my virtual gaming friends on the net. Unlike World of Atari, which I attended last, there seemed to be less urgency or a rush for everyone to get in the door when the doors opened. I think this situation was helped by the fact that many show exclusive items were not for sale right away, such as Eric Bacher's games (Pesco and Merlin's Walls). Maybe it was me, but I seemed much more relaxed. I made it a point to quickly go around to everyone's booth before the 1st presentation to scan and purchase any items that I may want before they were gone. I was a little taken back by Hasbro's booth, whom I expected to have a large presence at the show! , was not that impressive. On the contrary however, as I came in the door, I was immediately impressed with the booth that the Blue Sky Rangers put up. It was very impressive and distinct. Kudos to those folks. I didn't really get a chance to complete my rounds before the 1st keynote presentation, however, I knew I'd be back.

There was a collectors swap meet in which one lucky collector (a friend of mine from Redmond) was able to pick up a Video Life cart for FIVE BUCKS!!!!!!!!!!!! I was able to solidify a trade deal with that good chap Marco Kerstens and I filled a couple of holes in my collection, including Fathom for the Intellivision. All-in-all however, I did not like the room or the setup for the swap meet. I wish there could have been more tables for people to display their wares. It was tough moving about without accidently stepping on someone's stuff.

I really enjoyed the keynote presentations that I was able to see. They were varied and frequent. In fact, they were so frequent that I was unable to attend all of them, so I was forced to choose which ones were most important to me. I was able to attend and see the following, either in part or in completeness:

Vectrex Guys (Group Speech)
Atari 2600 Programmers/Designers (Group Speech)
Blue Sky Rangers (Group Speech)
Imagic Guys (Group Speech)
Activision Guys (Group Speech)
Ralph Baer
John Harris

I found all these very interesting and informative. My only complaint about the presentations was not with the content, but rather with the room in which they were held. The room was only large enough to seat about 120 people. As a result, some of the keynote presentations were a little crowded. Seating for up to 50 more would have been more comfortable for everyone.

At the closing of the show on Sunday, the CGE staff began tossing hundreds of games on to the show floor for $0.50 each. Most were common games, however, there were some pretty decent ones and I was able to get

a few shrinkwrapped titles for my personal collection. The whole thing looked like a feeding frenzy of piranhas and sharks. My hand got stepped on several times. At one point I almost broke my ankle as someone stepped on it.

On another high point, I did get to meet a couple of folks from Electronic Playground (a TV magazine of sorts dedicated to videogames in Vancouver B.C..). Hopefully, they will work something out to send a broadcast to the states, or at the very least, in Seattle.

Of the booths that I visited, the ones that most impressed me during the show were as follows (No particular order):

Blue Sky Rangers-
They had the best presentation of all the dealers. Very professional setup along with demos and games of unreleased prototypes. My favorite of which was the Sea Duel game for the 2600. Also shown were Rocky & BullWinkle (2600), Masters Of The Universe (Colecovision), Yogi's Frustration and a couple of others. They also previewed the upcoming compilation Intellivision Lives for the Playstation which appeared to play much better than the Activison Classics. Best of all, they gave out neat prizes, T-shirts and hats.

B&C Computers-
They had some cool Jag and Lynx stuff which I couldn't resist buying. I really enjoy talking to Bruce when he had time.

Songbird Productions-
Carl Forhan had demos of Skyhammer and Protector up and running for the Jaguar. Protector looks pretty cool (When can we get that damn encryption code released!). I also picked up his creations for the Lynx and played Cyber Virus, the unreleased game Lynx title from Beyond Games.

CyberPunks -
I talked briefly with these guys and picked up the Stella at 20 video. I am still not sure what their intentions are in regards to the 2600, however, the Stella @ 20 video is very well done, save for the soundtrack (very cool logo though). I sorely missed seeing Russ Perry Jr. as I was hoping to meet him there.

Nyko-
Hey, I really like Dan Kramer. Dan works for them as a consultant on the PSX trackball. Dan was the creator of the Atari 5200 trackball (a real piece of work). I forgot to get one of his T-Shirts though.

Hasbro-
Saw previews of Missile Command, Q*Bert and Pong. The booth wasn't impressive, but if you previewed their games you got a free Atari Classic compilation disk for your PC (no Mac version unfortunately).

Telegames-
The best part of this was the fact that you could buy without the typical S&H fees. However, they charged upwards of $300 for both, the TG Express and the TG Duo. Too expensive for my tastes. They also had 2 new Lynx games for sale, Hyperdrome and Sokomania. In addition they had Yars Revenge for $19.95 for the Gameboy color. Very good translation. I played this on the plane home.

Once Upon Atari -

Yars truly, Howard Scott Warshaw.... need I say more. Yeah, I bought his video and he signed my carts.

Digital Press/Rolenta Press-
Got to meet Joe Santuli finally. I also got to meet and chat with Leonard Herman as well. Although I am a subscriber to the Digital Press and I have a copy of Leonard's book, it was still cool to hang with these two gentlemen. I think Leonard had his book for an incredibly low price of $12. Oh yeah.... they also had a sign up sheet for folks to get information on the next edition of Worship The Woodgrain (Thanks guys)

Hits:

Eric Bacher's version of 2600 Pac-Man. It kicks butt!!!!!!! Too bad he won't release it :-(
Getting to meet and talk with the programmers in a one-on-one situation.
Getting David Rolf's signature on my Beamrider cart.
Getting David Crane's signature on my Pitfall carts.
The Unreleased Protos from Blue Sky Rangers.
Talking with Dave Polaro at the airport on the way home.
Meeting and chatting with Ralph Baer.

Misses:

Not enough attendees.
Not enough vendors.
I hate to say it... no Nolan.
No Curt Vendel.
No Jerry Jessop.

Things I missed on my visit:

The Mustang Ranch's 2 for 1 going out of business sale :-)
A good night's sleep.
When I tally it it all up... I had a great time for my money. Your mileage may vary of course.

Lee Krueger

- Twin Galaxies Award -

presented August 13, 1999

The Internet's Foremost
Video Game Archives.

This award was presented to Mr. Donald A. Thomas, Jr., curator of I.C. When (http://www.icwhen.com) by Mr. Walter Day of the Twin Galaxies Intergalactic Scoreboard (http://www.twingalagies.com) at the Classic Gaming Expo (http://www.cgexpo.com) celebrity dinner on Friday, August 13, 1999. It names I.C. When as the Internet's Foremost Video Game Archives and Mr. Thomas as a pioneer in preserving video game history.

- My Heroes -

Copyright 1999 - Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
all rights reserved - http://www.icwhen.com

(Revised 08/22/99)

by Donald A. Thomas, Jr.

Typically, I try to be very careful when using emotionally-charged descriptions of events. Such depictions can come across as mushy or disingenuous. Just the same, I think it will be impossible to ignore emotions to describe Classic Gaming Expo ’99 (CGE99). It was more than just re-visiting friends or having Ed Logg’s daughter ask me for my autograph. It was more than the award presented to ICWhen.com by Walter Day of Twin Galaxies during the Friday night celebrity dinner. Although I admit those things are memorable, they fall far short to describe the show’s brilliant ambiance.

John Hardie and Keita Iida have been video game fans for a very long time. I remember them contacting Atari Corporation in Sunnyvale, California frequently to learn about what we were working on. They were always receptive to any freebies we might send them and always interested in any great deals that Atari had not yet advertised. That may not be an unusual story. Atari received thousands of such letters and phone calls every week. But not too many fans planned their vacations to visit Atari or took time off from work to attend a cross country trade show in which Atari was an exhibitor.

These gentlemen regard the video game industry as a magical kingdom. The pioneers of the industry are their greatest heroes and there is no boundary, financial or otherwise, that holds these men back from their greatest pleasures in life: Classic Video Gaming. I think that is where the true magic begins. The magic that captivated the hearts of CGE99 organizers was shared with everyone who attended.

For those who are not interested in classic video gaming, what John and Keita have done has little meaning. Personally, I understand. I would have little interest to meet a room full of archeologists at some type of bone and fossil exposition. Notwithstanding, what these guys have done is no less than remarkable. For the first time in video game history, a gathering of the industry’s most noted pioneers has taken place. Not at some private resort. Not in a mansion accessible only by limousine. But at a place and in a venue advertised to the public. These men and women put aside their personal and corporate lives to attend a special event organized by a group of young, energetic and inexperienced show promoters. Not only did CGE99 attract the industry’s most noted personalities, but the floor was swarming with lights and cameras from media opportunists hoping to interview even half of the dozens of names that attended the show.

Not many of us will fully appreciate the obstacles that confront a trade show organization of any size. Usually, a trade show is funded by some greater source of cash, but CGE99 was fully funded by the remaining college funds the organizers had saved; in many ways the show was funded by their allowances. And the expenses are great. There are scouting trips, there are t-shirt and caps that must be paid in advance. There are Las Vegas event fees and hotel expenses. There was the fully paid celebrity dinner hosting well over 100 people. There are the special favors that some guests demanded, not appreciating the fact that the organizers were paying for them from their own pockets. There were equipment rentals and catering guarantees. Not to mention, time off from work and phone bills into the hundreds of dollars.

If the financial issues are not enough, there’s the sinister side of

individuals whom try to ruin the success of others. There were the online controversies. There were unproven accusations by people who should know better. There were newsgroup posts forged in the name of show organizers and there were a few people bitter that CGE99 was not an opportunity to make a lot of appearance fees.

Personally, I am very proud of Keita Iida, John Hardie, Sean Kelly, Don Rogers, Larry Anderson and the numerous other volunteers who contributed to this year's show. No, I'm not really proud of them as much as I'm proud to know them as a new part of history that is in the making. In my view, they have earned their positions as members of the video game industry as much as any of the guests that attended. These guys are now my true heroes.

I look forward to sharing next year's show with my heroes.

Visit ICWhen.com for over 160 exclusive photos from CGE '99.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Classic Gamer Magazine
Chris Cavanaugh
Sarah Thomas
7770 Regents Road #113-293
San Diego, CA 92122
(858) 455-6562
(781) 846-0373 fax

Classic Gamer Magazine Debuts
Premieres at Classic Gaming Expo '99

LAS VEGAS, August 14, 1999 - Do you miss reading about the "good old days" of videogames? Classic Gamer Magazine has arrived in Las Vegas to launch a publication dedicated to classic videogames. Classic Gaming Expo '99 was chosen as the debut location in order to pay tribute to the true videogame pioneers.

"Classic Gamer Magazine is styled in the spirit of the original videogame magazines of the 1980's," says Chris Cavanaugh, Editor in Chief. "We wanted to create a publication that is informative, fun to read, and allows readers to rediscover their favorite classic games. The resurgence of interest in classic videogames demands a publication dedicated to these perennial favorites." Classic Gamer Magazine answers that demand with news, reviews, humor, and opinion about these ageless original games and their updated counterparts.

The full-color magazine sells for $4.00 an issue; quarterly subscriptions are available for $15.00. For further information, visit www.classicgamer.com.

-Cav

Editor-In-Chief
Classic Gamer Magazine
http://www.classicgamer.com

=~=~=~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Appeals Court Sides With Microsoft In Sun Lawsuit

In a victory for Microsoft Corp., a federal appeals court Monday overturned an order that had forced the software giant to make changes in its popular Windows 98 operating system and Internet Explorer browser.

The U.S. Appeals Court for the Ninth Circuit said a lower court erred in presuming that Microsoft's contested implementation of the Java programming language could have caused ''irreparable harm" to rival Sun Microsystems Inc.

However, the three-judge appeals court panel agreed with U.S. District Judge Ronald Whyte that Sun was likely to prevail on the merits of its dispute with Microsoft over the interpretation of the 1996 licensing agreement between the two computer industry leaders.

''Sufficient evidence supports the district court's finding that Sun demonstrated a probability of success on the merits of its claim that Microsoft's modifications of Java violated the TLDA (technology license and distribution agreement)," the panel said in its ruling.

Microsoft was forced to make minor changes in its products after Whyte issued an injunction last November, barring the company from shipping any versions of Java that did not pass compatibility tests by Sun, which owns rights to the language.

Sun has contended that Microsoft has distributed "polluted" versions of Java in an effort to undermine the popularity of the language, which has become increasingly popular for Internet applications.

Microsoft Injunction Reconsidered

A federal appeals court ordered reconsideration Monday of a judge's restrictions against shipments by Microsoft Corp. of software containing Java programming language.

U.S. District Judge Ronald Whyte of San Jose granted an injunction to Sun Microsystems last November. He said Sun was likely to show that Microsoft had violated a licensing agreement allowing it to use Sun's version of Java in its products.

The injunction prohibited Microsoft from distributing products that used Sun's Java copyrights, including Windows 98 and Internet Explorer 4.0, unless Microsoft conformed to Sun's standards for Java.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Monday that there was evidence to support Whyte's conclusion that Microsoft had violated the agreement by designing a version of Java incompatible with other software. But the court also said Whyte failed to explain why the alleged violation was a copyright infringement, rather than a breach of contract.

The distinction is important. A contract violation can justify an injunction against product shipments only if the innocent party can show it is being harmed. Otherwise, it must allow the shipments, then sue for damages.

Java, introduced by Sun in 1995, allows developers to write a software application once and have it run on a variety of computers, regardless of the underlying system. Sun has tried to promote its form of Java as a universal programming language.

The court ordered the injunction lifted, but its ruling does not take effect immediately. Sun can ask Whyte to restore the injunction while he reconsiders the dispute.

AOL Rolls Out Upgraded Instant Messenger

America Online Inc. Tuesday launched a new version of its instant electronic messaging service that is capable of delivering news and financial information to all users, regardless of provider.

AOL Instant Messenger is available free and can be downloaded off the Internet.

About 45 million people, including 15 million AOL subscribers, now use Instant Messenger, the company said.

AOL has been under pressure from other Internet heavy hitters, such as Microsoft Corp., to establish uniform technology that would make the hugely popular messaging service universal.

AOL recently said it had reached agreement with Apple Computer Inc., EarthLink Network Inc., MindSpring Enterprises Inc., Juno Online Services Inc. and Novell Inc. to offer their customers co-branded messaging products or their own instant-messaging products linked to Instant Messenger.

Users of the AOL service also include users of CompuServe, Netscape, International Business Machines Corp.'s Lotus Notes and Sametime, and RealNetworks Inc.

Glitch Exposes E-Mail Passwords

Microsoft Corp. is promising to fix by this week's end a bug in its new Internet chat software that permits co-workers and others to see a person's e-mail password.

The glitch in the company's new MSN Messenger software means that others who have access to a person's computer could impersonate that person to

read and even send e-mail using his Hotmail account without anyone's knowledge.

Microsoft said that even if customers delete their saved password and enter it manually, it still becomes visible if another person types a specific sequence of keystrokes on that computer.

Microsoft, whose software runs most of the world's personal computers, said it was made aware of the bug earlier this week but promised to fix it by week's end.

Deanna Sanford, the product manager for MSN, said the bug's ill effects were mitigated because a person must have physical access to the victim's computer, meaning the problem will be worse in offices where co-workers share machines than for home users.

''In a shared office environment, if you trust the people you work with, this will probably never be an issue," Sanford said. But she said Microsoft recommends protecting each computer with a password.

The problem was the latest embarrassment for Microsoft over its attempt to capture part of the burgeoning market for Internet chat software, currently dominated by America Online Inc.'s Instant Messenger software.

When Microsoft unveiled its chat software earlier this month, AOL complained that Microsoft engineers had hacked into its proprietary network to let MSN customers communicate with AOL's customers.

AOL successfully blocked Microsoft's software several times, but with each attempt Microsoft redesigned its chat software to bypass AOL's blocking attempts.

MSN Messenger customers currently can chat with people using AOL's software, and Microsoft - in a bid for the moral high ground - announced earlier this week it will release its software protocols so that other companies can design software that interpolates with MSN.

The latest Microsoft bug occurs when customers use the software to check their e-mail using Microsoft's popular Web-based Hotmail service. If a person stops the resulting Internet page from loading and looks at the underlying software code - which requires merely three clicks with the mouse - the user's e-mail name and password are displayed.

Sanford said Microsoft will scramble the information in the upcoming patched version using encryption technology.

MS Releases New Media Software

Microsoft Corp. has released a new version of its digital media platform, called Microsoft Windows Media Technologies 4, as it prepares to go after other streaming companies such as RealNetworks Inc.

The market for delivering media content such as audio and video is becoming more popular as more companies look to the Web to get their movies, music and other content to consumers. Through Windows Media Technology, Microsoft is trying to set a new standard -- and perhaps unseat other companies that have already gained a foothold.

"They’re kind of playing catch-up," said International Data Corp. analyst Kevin Hause.

Microsoft said the software can deliver CD-quality audio that takes up half the space of competing formats, such as MP3. But the Windows Media content may not be as crisp, Hause said. "You do lose a little of the quality."

Like RealNetwork’s technology, the player offers more than just audio: Microsoft is also promising near-TV-quality video and no per-stream charge.

To prove its technology is taking off, Microsoft rolled out a press release in which several companies praised the product, including one that said it ditched RealAudio. "It was an easy choice for us to drop support for RealAudio in favor of Windows Media in our newest release, MusicMatch Jukebox 4.1."

Another jukebox maker, Sonic Foundry, said it also will support Windows Media. A jukebox is an advanced digital media player -- desktop software that allows people to easily sort and retrieve their music.

Microsoft said the new technology will let publishers control the distribution and use of digital audio and video content. Some music companies have complained that the digital music revolution has made unauthorized use of the products much more prevalent.

That may have prompted Columbia Records to introduce Maria Carey’s new song "HeartBreaker" on Monday, only on Windows Media.

RealNetworks spokesman Jay Wampold said his company isn’t worried about Microsoft’s new product because the software giant has been trying to enter the digital media player market for a while, and still only has a tiny sliver compared with Real’s more than 80 percent share.

"I think we’ve proven over time we’ve found a way to win," Wampold said. "They keep us honest, and we’re moving quickly."

A few weeks ago, Real released the first test version of its RealJukebox.

Y2K Chiefs Prepare For Dry Run On 9/9/99

A little-known computer glitch that could cause system failures on Sept. 9 -- 9/9/99 -- is about to get a lot of attention.

In a kind of dry run for the Year 2000 glitch, authorities and computer scientists worldwide will be scrutinizing networks on that Thursday for any fallout from the so-called ‘‘Nines Problem."

At issue is the impact of an old programming convention that used four nines in a row -- 9999 -- to tell computers to stop processing data or to perform a special task.

In the relatively unlikely case that systems misread Sept. 9 as 9999 -- without zeros as in 09/09 -- they might confuse the nines with what programmers call an ‘‘end of file" marker.

Four nines in the date field could also trigger a grand total or a sorting

operation, said Jim Kelton, president of Software Unlimited, an Irvine, California, software consulting firm specialized in networks and Y2K.

‘‘All nines could be interpreted as almost anything," he said. For instance, the nines might cause computers to disregard data received after Sept. 9, causing a cutoff in the updating of bank records.

The glitch, which the financial industry has been fixing as part of its $9 billion Y2K preparations, could figure in customized applications written in decades-old computer languages such as FORTRAN, COBOL and RPG, experts say.

Robert Banghart, director of development at Unisolve, a Costa Mesa, California, software firm working on the Y2K glitch, said a string of nines long had been used to tell computers to "end a routine," or no longer execute certain instructions. In a worst-case scenario, four nines in a date field could spark problems not unlike Y2K, a coding glitch that threatens to keep ill-prepared computers from distinguishing the year 2000 from the year 1900.

The U.N.-backed International Y2K Cooperation Center, a global clearing house for millennium bug data, is using Sept. 9 to rehearse a plan aimed at keeping up-to-the-minute tabs on how the world is faring as it enters 2000.

‘‘It’s a dry run for the rollover date," said Lisa Pelegrin, spokeswoman for the Washington-based, World Bank-funded center. ‘‘We will be testing our reporting system."

That reporting system, to be updated in real time on the center’s Web site, www.iy2kcc.org, ultimately will reflect the input of 170 or more national Y2K coordinators.

On the center’s Sept. 9 shakeout run, about 15 countries are expected to take part. For the most part, they are members of its steering committee -- Britain, Bulgaria, Chile, Gambia, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, South Korea and the United States.

New Zealand and Australia, also active backers, are due to report in. Graeme Inchley, Australia’s Y2K coordinator, told Reuters that he was ‘‘absolutely convinced" Sept. 9 would go by without a hitch.

Sept. 9 also will mark the first test of a $40 million-dollar U.S. inter-agency Y2K center meant to give U.S. decision makers a round-the-clock view of Y2K problems in their areas of responsibility.

Likewise, on Sept. 8 and 9, the North American Electric Reliability Council, an industry group, will rehearse an emergency scenario to test operating, communications and contingency responses for the Y2K transition.

‘‘If all goes well in this drill, the electric utilities can pat themselves on the back; if not, they may be tempted to blame the ’nines’," said Janis Gogan, an information technology expert at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass.

Mitch Ratcliffe, editorial director of publisher Ziff Davis’s Y2K Web site, rated Sept. 9’s chance of triggering problems as extremely low because the date would have to be misrepresented -- without zeros as in 09/09 -- ‘‘in a way that defies logic."

‘‘The Nines Problem is almost totally a myth," he said.

Screen Savers -- A Fading Art Form

When home computers became popular, it appeared that they would give rise to an innovative art form -- the screen saver.

Sold as a way to prevent a persistent image from leaving a permanent ghost on your monitor, screen savers quickly evolved into clever, complex programs that were more fun than most of the programs you could run.

But now, the art form is languishing. Berkeley Systems (http://www.berksys.com), which built its reputation on toasters that fly across the screen when you were not using your computer, has branched off into other fields. New screen saver products are few and far between, and too many of today's screen savers seem flat and unimaginative.

And there's no sign of a Renaissance on the horizon.

Blame it on the Internet, blame it on Bill Gates, and, ironically, blame it on improvements in monitor design.

''Screen savers were originally meant to save your screen. Now, with better monitors that don't burn in an image, there's no practical reason for them," Julie Kanarowski, an associate product marketing manager at Berkeley, said.

You can blame it on Gates because Microsoft made a handful of screen savers standard equipment on Windows 95 and Windows 98. Why pay $60 for an innovative package of screen savers when you got some with Windows? It didn't matter to some Windows 98 users if the ''Sports" screen saver was just a bunch of Xs, Os and arrows on a chalkboard, or if the other choices were equally anemic. They were free.

But they aren't much better than what you can find on the Internet.

At ScreenSaver.com (http://www.screensaver.com), the newly-renovated Web site that boasts 200 screen savers, you can see how the art form is still a long way from its potential. For example, there is a Garfield screen saver where the cartoon character simply takes an object out of the refrigerator. Then the screen goes blank and he's seen taking out something else. It's free, but it is an example of you get what you pay for.

On the other hand, I liked the quirkiness of the bouncing sheep screen saver, which is also free, and the ''Attack of the Y2K Bug," which sells for $10.

Eric Robichaud of ScreenSaver.com said there are a lot of garbage screen savers floating around.

''We post maybe 8 percent of all the screen savers we see," said Robichaud, who also runs R.I. Soft Systems, which makes some of the better screen savers released these days. ''Anybody who buys a compiler can go out and build one. But there are very few people who can write a screen saver with enough depth."

It's not that consumers are not looking for good screen savers, Robichaud said. When people are searching the Internet by topic, screen savers are

right behind sex sites and MP3 music files in popularity. ScreenSaver.com gets about a million visitors per month.

Good screen savers are hard to find on the Internet because browsers are not willing to pay for them -- and the best ones cost a lot to create.

‘‘When we did the ’Terminator 2’ screen saver back in ’94, it had 10 different modules. You could watch them for hours and not see something twice," Robichaud said. ‘‘But it was extremely expensive to produce. It took us six months to develop it with four people really pushing."

Because today’s consumers ‘‘are looking for something for free or at low cost, a lot don’t have the same depth" as a few years ago, he said.

Perhaps because the typical Internet screen saver is so bad, Berkeley Systems still gets a lot of mileage out of its older products. It sold 82,000 copies of ‘‘After Dark 4.0" in 1998 -- two years after its original release.

Next month, Kanarowski said, Berkeley is coming out with its first new screen saver product since 1996. Celebrating the 10th anniversary of its flying toasters, it is a repackaging of its most popular screen savers, plus two new ones.

‘‘It does take a lot of effort and it is quite cost-intensive (to create a good screen saver), and the size of the product category has declined, especially in terms of the high value screen saver," Kanarowski said. ‘‘The average price is $14 to $15 and the products tend to be nichier."

‘‘After Dark 4.0," which once sold for $69, now sells its package of 20 screen savers for $30 or less. ‘‘Totally Twisted Screen Savers," which features bungee-jumping animals, fish swimming in a toxic waste pond, and playful kittens who can get a little too close to a riding mower, now sells for $15.

Berkeley has also branched out by featuring its screen saver characters in a collection of mini-games, a few of which are surprisingly addicting. ‘‘After Dark Games," which originally sold for $30 when it was released a year ago, is down to $20.

Will the screen saver ever bloom again as a thriving art form? Robichaud said it will happen as more artists develop programming skills, or when fewer programming skills are required to build one.

‘‘Computers have only been around for 20 years and screen savers for 10," Kanarowski said. ‘‘Although the category went through a much bigger peak and has declined, I don’t see screen savers totally going away. People will always enjoy screen saving. People like to be entertained, and the screen savers will keep getting better."

Stan Lee Updates Comics With Internet

Stan Lee, the creator of Spiderman, the Incredible Hulk and the X-Men, is updating his pantheon of superheroes with, what else -- an Internet twist and a public stock listing.

Lee, who breathed life into some of the most enduring and profitable comic

book characters, Monday took his new company, Stan Lee Media, public in a move to gather support for a flashy assault on the Internet and the comics industry.

The Encino, Calif.-based company will officially launch Tuesday a Web site that the 76-year-old honorary chairman of Marvel Comics plans to build up into a network of fresh superhero content in cyberspace.

‘‘I’m hoping we will be the most comfortable, the most interesting place, the most exciting place for young people who are interested in comics, science fiction...and things that are over the top," Lee said in an interview.

‘‘The Internet is such a bigger, more powerful, more globe-spanning medium than comics. I’m excited to have a chance to do it again. The possibilities just boggle my mind."

The site, (http://www.stanlee.net), will weave e-commerce and merchandising with a made-for-Internet comic and a community of personal Web pages devoted to superheroes and their evil counterparts.

Lee’s earlier creations will not be an official part of the site. Instead, Lee is overseeing the creation of a new Internet-only comic, called ‘‘The Seventh Portal," about seven youths from different countries, who, well, maybe it’s best to let Lee explain:

‘‘Because of the Internet, in some mystical way, they get transported into some other dimension and they find the warlord of that dimension is planning to attack our dimension," Lee said. Animation and voices will replace panel drawings and dialogue boxes. Visitors will tune in biweekly for updates.

Eventually, Lee plans to hand over the creative reins to a staff of writers and artists who will fashion more good guys and bad guys. It is hoped the characters will migrate out of cyberspace and on to store shelves.

‘‘If they are as successful as I hope they will be, we’ll spin them off into Saturday morning cartoons, toys and merchandise or whatever we can do," Lee said.

Like Mr. Fantastic, the leader of the Fantastic Four, Lee also has marshaled his own cabal of super-talent, including Internet animation pioneers from Disney and members of the Academy-award winning digital effects team from ‘‘Titanic."

‘‘I feel the way I felt years ago when I was at Marvel, working with who I thought were the best artists and writers in the business," Lee said.

The company’s listing as a bulletin-board stock was more low-key than some Internet plays, coming through a merger with a publicly listed shell company. But executives said a main motive for the move was to hook key talent through the coveted currency of the Internet economy -- stock options.

‘‘We felt we needed a security to attract talented people and assets," said Jim Lucas, an investor relations executive with the company. The stock rose $2.625 to $9 Monday. ‘‘We think that the company is in a position to meet the Nasdaq small-cap requirements soon," Lucas said.

Museum Celebrates Personal Computer

From vacuum tubes and paper tape to Atari Pong and Apple IIs, the Computer Museum of America offers trip down technology lane.

The collection of more than 200 pieces spans a century of computing from a 1900 circular slide rule that looks like a pocket watch to an IBM 360 mainframe computer from the 1960s that’s about the size of three gym lockers.

The nonprofit museum’s newest addition is a 22-year-old MITS Altair 8800b, donated Thursday by a Winnetka, Ill., patent lawyer who won a contest for having the oldest personal computer still in use.

‘‘I’ve got a basement full of computer stuff that my wife says I need to get rid of," said John Shepard, who paid $1,300 for the MITS computer kit in late 1976 and kept modifying it over the years. ‘‘Maybe this is the new home for it."

To mark the 25th anniversary of the personal computer, Texas-based Dell Computer held the contest. Shepard got a $15,000 new system as a replacement for his museum donation.

Old clunkers like the MITS Altair, one of the earliest commercially available personal computers, and IBM card punch machines are the foundation of the museum, one of just a few in the country dedicated to preserving the history of computer technology.

Jim and Marie Petroff, founders of the San Diego Chapter of Independent Computer Consultants Association, started the museum in 1983 because they were worried about companies junking their old machines when upgrading to new ones.

‘‘We just really hated to see it go into the trash heap, when we would say 20 years from now, ’Geez, we wish we had saved that," Petroff said in literature provided by the museum.

Using their connections with other consultants and scores of computer companies, the couple, who now live north of Los Angeles, built their collection but didn’t find a permanent home for it until 1992.

Coleman College, the second-oldest computer college in the country, gave the couple some space at its suburban San Diego campus - in what was once a bowling alley.

The prize pieces are the Hollerith Manual Card Punch, based on a Herman Hollerith invention for taking the 1890 U.S. Census, and the Royal Precision Vacuum Tube Computer. Built in 1963, the Royal Precision cost $50,000 new. It contains 113 vacuum tubes, a drum memory disk and a paper tape reader and punch.

A display case shows the progression of storage disks, starting with one from 1965 that’s the size of a tractor-trailer tire. It held 2.5 megabytes of data and had to be sandblasted to be erased.

Curator David Weil said he has had many offers to donate old Tandy TRS-80s or Apple IIe computers, but his stock room is full of those popular mid-80s computers.

He’s looking for more MITA Atairs or the even rarer Apple I, single-board computer built by Stephen Wozniak. Only about 220 were sold by Wozniak and Steve Jobs for $666.66 before they upgraded the system and started Apple Computer Inc. in 1977.

‘‘If it’s older than 1983, we’re interested in it," said Weil, one of just two full-time staffers.

Those who visit the museum usually see a computer that jogs their memory and ‘‘it’s like seeing an old friend again," said Rush Glick, education coordinator for the museum. ‘‘And, everybody’s got a war story to tell."

For more information about the museum, call 619-465-8226 or visit the Web site at www.computer-museum.org.

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc.is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@delphi.com

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.